

INTERNETCONSULTATION ON YOUTH STRATEGY – INPUT NUFFIC

1. If you look at the 3 regions that we focus on (MENA, Horn of Africa, Sahel) – can you mention specific trends per region which are relevant for the strategy. Are there, for example, specific sectors where there is much to be gained? Or specific skills that young people lack in a certain region or sector?

The three regions within the focus of the youth strategy share in part a few cross-cutting themes and trends. Some pertain to the fragility (economic, political, agricultural) of the region, others are more on cultural and social developments as a whole. Access to education (the presence and vicinity of educational facilities and institutes) and physical ability to engage in education are not automatically assumed. Especially for refugees, 'rejected migrants', internally displaced persons (idp's), girls and young people with disabilities. It should also be noted that in many countries, young migrants are not allowed to enroll in specific education programmes / training, or take up specific professional occupations. A focus on specific target groups within countries is highly recommended.

The changing landscape of the labor market and its needs calls for well-skilled graduates with hands-on, technical experience. Out of necessity private companies often have their own training facilities to train graduates, also as a consequence of defaults in the official education system that provides hardly relevant practical skills training. This is discernable in all three regions up to a certain extent. In cases where the private sector does not fill the education gap, graduates are forced to learn on the job. The implications are poor quality of services and low productivity of young employees and a low (self) esteem and starting salary of for instance TVET graduates. A poor perspective for a young generation, but with severe implications for the transformation to become more stable and service oriented economies.

At Nuffic, we see a growing need in equipping young people with the necessary skillset for securing sustainable positions on the national and international labor market. In order to obtain the necessary skills (from primary to higher education) needed, the education sector and system itself needs to be strengthened, especially at TVET level, addressing labour market needs in specific sectors, with opportunities for further economic growth and employment. More specifically, the chances in strengthening education lie with:

- Training management and staff of education institutes in the (re)formulation and use of occupational standards;
- Include the triple helix approach (government, education and private sector, representing the value chain) in order to increase the relevance of the educational programmes (involvement in formulation of occupational standards, review of curricula, guestlectureships and realisation of On the Job Training/internships). and to establish public private partnerships;
- Strengthen occupational programmes based on a dual system approach. Make use of successful examples and expertise of TVET systems in the Netherlands, Finland, Germany;
- Invest in technology and the technical context according to the new occupational standards, combined with digital literacy and digital inclusion. Pay specific attention to transferable life skills, 21st century skills, as well as entrepreneurial skills - integrate them in the curriculum and train staff.
- Include a gender approach in the formulation of occupational standards;
- Strengthen skills, knowledge and attitude of graduates through intensive internship/apprenticeships programmes and placement of students;

- Develop On the Job Training programmes (OJT) for students and staff;
- Strengthening the capabilities of TVET teachers in practical and life skills, as well as commercial and networking skills and in sustainable and gender-sensitive technologies to increase agricultural production and processing;
- Improve the development and dissemination of (new) technologies to increase agricultural production in a gender sensitive and sustainable way;
- Improve the awareness of latest developments and the managerial and linking capacity of management of ATVETs and organisations key to the sector;
- Develop and strengthen linkages of ATVETs with universities, private sector, farmers, input suppliers and key organisations;
- Involve alumni in setting up and maintaining linkages and involve role models and young leadership.

2. Do you have examples of successful "scaled up" initiatives / programs in the field of education and work to increase youth employment, and if so, which ones? Or do you know of certain successful initiatives that are worth scaling up in the 3 regions mentioned?

Nuffic has a rich history of over 60 years in capacity building, where education across the board has been the main focus in over 50 countries in the world. Under the MENA, NICHE, NFP and Orange Knowledge programmes, financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, Nuffic has been supporting capacity building of HE/TVET institutes as well as professionals, through institutional cooperation projects, group training and fellowships. The programmes have also supported strategic (semi) government authorities to improve the regulation and accreditation process of education institutes and curricula that support the triple-helix approach. A context and needs assessment, carried out in close consultation with the Dutch embassies and local stakeholders, provides the basis for targeted interventions per country and / or region, addressing labour market needs and demands, through specific capacity development interventions at organizational and individual level (.

The programmes contribute to the cross-cutting themes of entrepreneurship development and private sector development. The OKP for example aims to strengthen conditions for a business enabling environment and reduce constraints on business growth pursuant to Dutch economic interests.. This is realized through strengthening local skills and knowledge development, by means of cooperation with Dutch education and training institutes. Successful examples include training of SMEs, NGOs and GOs on business development and value chain management, the establishment of business incubators for students / young graduates, the inclusion of entrepreneurship in curricula, the setting up of internship programmes, and the establishment of institutional linkages between education institutes and private sector parties. Gender sensitive issues are also taken into account. The overall goal is to enhance impact on inclusive local economic development (i.e. through Agricultural Value Chain Development) and create a local knowledge infrastructure, meeting the changing needs of the labor market and enhancing employment opportunities for young people. As such, Nuffic has seen its fair share of beautiful failures and success stories. Many interesting examples and lessons learned were brought forward during a seminar on experiences with professional education and employment in the Middle East and Africa, organized by Nuffic and Edukans on 30 November 2018. We invite you to contact us directly for more information.

In all instances, initiatives or projects that were successful relied heavily on a systems approach where education, research, private sector development and a critical take organizational abilities were embedded.

3. Do you have specific ideas or additions about how we can make young people part of this policy? How do we ensure that they participate in the implementation of this strategy?

Youth employment is not mere job placement, it is also job creation by youth themselves in businesses they identify and need. They may discern different needs than established institutions do, and should be taken seriously. They need a seat at the table. This means looking beyond the traditional forms of outreach, enabling tailor made approaches to reach specific target groups.. But this should be in co-creation with youth, at country level and not one approach for the three separate regions. It is furthermore advised to make use of role models in involving youth. Last but not least it is recommended to adopt an integrated, multi-stakeholder approach (involving youth / community groups, private sector parties, micro-financing agencies), which takes the local context and gender issues into consideration, and pays specific attention to strengthening social cohesion and enhancing transferable life skills.

4. Anything else you feel is worth mentioning?

Youth healthcare is interlinked with youth education, as is youth engagement in security and social stability strongly linked with digital literacy and empowerment. So a focus on on just one single aspect without considering how it resonates with other themes would be ill advised. Also, as there is no such thing as youth in a static sense, a multi-generational for the youth of the future is needed.